

DRAFT

Platte Falls Conservation Area and Sharps Station Access

**Ten-Year Area Management Plan
FY 2016-2025**



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OVERVIEW

Area Name	Area Number	Year Acquired	Acreage	County	Administrative Responsibility	Maintenance Responsibility
Platte Falls Conservation Area (CA)	7929	1979	2,356	Platte	Wildlife	Wildlife
Sharps Station Access	6704	1967	10.3	Platte	Fisheries	Wildlife

Statements of Purpose:

A. Strategic Direction

These areas were purchased to provide a river oriented multiple use area along the unchannelized portion of the Platte River. The areas are to be managed to protect and enhance the Platte River, bottom and upland forest, and wetland complexes while providing public recreation to the extent compatible with these resources.

B. Desired Future Condition

The desired future condition of Platte Falls and Sharp Station Access are healthy natural communities that include mature forest, woodlands, upland and wetland complexes.

C. Federal Aid Statement

Platte Falls Conservation Area (CA): N/A

Sharps Station Access: This area, or a portion thereof, was acquired and developed with Land and Water Conservation Fund dollars to provide land or facilities for public outdoor recreation.

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

I. Special Considerations

Area Name	Priority Area	Natural Areas
Platte Falls CA	Jowler Creek Aquatic Conservation Opportunity Area	None
Sharps Station Access	Jowler Creek Aquatic Conservation Opportunity Area	None

II. Important Natural Features and Resources

Area Name	Species of Conservation Concern	Caves	Springs
Platte Falls CA	None	None	None
Sharps Station Access	None	None	None

III. Existing Infrastructure

Area Name	Parking Lots	Privies	Concrete Boat Ramps	Ponds/ Lakes	Other
Platte Falls CA	9 (5 ADA accessible) ¹	4(3 ADA accessible) ¹	2 ¹	3 fishing ponds (total of 3 acres, 1 ADA accessible), 3 fishless ponds (total of 3 acres)	1 shotgun range, 2 picnic pavilions ¹ , 1 archery range ¹ , 1 field archery range, 1 office/shop building, 1 shed
Sharps Station Access	1		1	None	None

¹ Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible

IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations

Area Name	Deed Restrictions	Easements	Federal Interest	Cultural Resources	Hazards	Endangered Species	Boundary Issues
Platte Falls CA	None	Yes ¹	Yes ³	Yes ⁵	None	None	None ⁶
Sharps Station Access	None	Yes ²	Yes ⁴	None	None	None	None

¹ The Northwest Electrical Power cooperative holds easement rights for a series of power lines stretching across the area. The Missouri Public Service of Platte County holds a perpetual easement for an electric utility line running along the north side of HH Highway near the Archery Range. A pipeline easement exists which traverses southwest from Sharp Station Road/Interurban Road intersection to the southwest corner of section 17.

² Right of way easement

³ Federal funds were used in the development of this area, or a portion thereof. The Department must maintain the developed project throughout its useful life. Federal funds may also be used in the management of this land. Fish and wildlife agencies may not allow recreational activities and related facilities that would interfere with the purpose for which the State is managing the land. Other uses may be acceptable and must be assessed in each specific situation.

⁴ This land must provide land/facilities for public outdoor recreation in perpetuity. Federal funds may also be used in the management of this land. Fish and wildlife agencies may not allow recreational activities and related facilities that would interfere with the purpose for which the State is managing the land. Other uses may be acceptable and must be assessed in each specific situation.

⁵ Yes, records kept with Missouri Department of Conservation (Department) Environmental Compliance Specialist. Managers should follow Best Management Practices for Cultural Resources found in the Department Resource Policy Manual.

⁶ Establishing accurate and identifiable boundary markers is a priority for this property.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Invasive plants continue to be a threat. Sericea lespedeza, Johnson grass, perennial smartweed, tall fescue and musk thistle are well established. Small populations of shrub honeysuckle, Japanese honeysuckle, winter creeper, tree of heaven, burning bush, autumn olive and teasel have been located on or very close to the area. These species will pose a problem in the future.
- 2) Managing forested areas is limited by the lack of accessibility to much of the forested areas. However, opportunities exist to maintain and enhance forest through the use of sustainable forest management practices for optimum wildlife habitat and forest health.
- 3) Mast production on the area currently favors soft mast. Planting or thinning to increase hard mast would provide better wildlife habitat and improve riparian corridor function.
- 4) The mix of bottomland and upland fertile soils allow natural succession and invasive plants to advance at an increased rate. Cropping in these open lands is needed to help set back succession and assist in the fight against invasive plants, while providing both food and brood rearing areas as fields are rotated and left idle. Many of these fields also present opportunities for dove management.
- 5) Management of early successional fields is needed to provide adequate brood rearing areas for ground nesting birds, increased forage for white-tail deer, habitat for rabbits and other non-game species. Platte Falls CA has many open fields that were planted to native grasses, forbs, and converted to other early successional vegetation types. These fields become void of the forb component over time, making them less desirable for wildlife. Management is needed to increase plant diversity and promote forb growth. By managing for a mix of shrub, forb and grass components, managers can maximize quality habitat.

Management Objective 1: Manage forested areas to improve overall natural community health while improving habitat for wildlife.

Strategy 1: Inventory forests and woodlands according to the inventory schedule to develop prescriptions for ecological and silvicultural treatment. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Control/suppress invasive species. (Wildlife, Fisheries)

Strategy 3: Increase hard mast by planting suitable tree species and by thinning to benefit hard mast species. (Wildlife, Fisheries, Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Provide food and cover for wildlife, and maintain early successional vegetation for a variety of wildlife species.

Strategy 1: Use permittee farmers in conjunction with Department staff to plant crops/food plots annually. Rotate crops to promote soil health. A portion of these acres will be fallowed each year to increase early successional habitat acres for wildlife. Ensure farming practices are conducted in accordance with the Soil and Water Conservation Plan for the area. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Utilize fertile crop fields for dove management. (Wildlife)

Strategy 3: Manage early successional old fields and existing stands of planted native grasses and forbs to maintain diverse vegetative habitats. Rotate management units to provide adequate habitat during management activities. (Wildlife)

Strategy 4: Control/suppress invasive or exotic species. (Wildlife)

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations:

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) The stream resources on the area are degraded due to past land use practices and large-scale channelization of downstream rivers. This is evident by the incised stream channels and numerous past head-cuts in smaller drainages leading to the mainstream channels.
- 2) Approximately 1,700 acres of the area lie within the floodplain of the Platte River. Of those, approximately 600 acres have the capability to be managed for opportunistic wetland units. Moist soil management in those units is important to provide enhanced water quality and additional acres of seasonal habitat for wetland-dependent wildlife. However, deteriorated levees and insufficient water structures make it difficult to manage those units to their full potential. Creating this habitat in a way that does not impair floodplain function and within current budget and time capacities will be a challenge.
- 3) Pond resources are few on the area. Two educational ponds are catch-and-release fishing ponds and are available for reserved use; one area pond harbors a fishable population. Management efforts will be concentrated on the educational ponds.

Management Objective 1: Stream corridors will be protected and enhanced to improve water quality, promote stable stream banks, provide flood abatement and increase habitat diversity.

Strategy 1: Evaluate buffer widths and conditions and provide recommendations to the Area Manager. Additional evaluations should be repeated every five years to account for changes in land management and area boundaries. (Fisheries)

Strategy 2: Maintain and/or establish 100-foot or wider vegetated buffers on both sides of permanent and intermittent streams by fiscal year (FY) 2016, pursuant to Department guidelines (2009). A diversity of suitable trees and shrub species will be used if buffers need to be established or increased. Herbaceous vegetation with a woody component is suitable for buffers along streams with channels that are not deeply incised. However, most streams on the area are deeply incised due to Platte River channelization. (Wildlife, Fisheries, Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Maintain existing floodplain connectivity and enhance wetland-dependent wildlife, spawning and nursery habitat for riverine fish species.

Strategy 1: Determine the feasibility of replacing deteriorated flood protection levees with low profile, broad based levees that are set back away from the river.

Management Objective 3: Manage existing wetland units and explore options to enhance their functionality as seasonally flooded wetlands.

Strategy 1: Provide habitat for migratory birds and resident wetland wildlife using available management techniques. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Install high quality water structures that allow for improved water manipulation. (Design and Development)

Strategy 3: Control/suppress invasive species. (Wildlife, Fisheries)

Management Objective 4: Ponds capable of supporting fish will be managed to promote angling through a combination of stocking, vegetation management and maintained access. Emphasis will be placed on ponds used for education.

Strategy 1: Stock channel catfish every year in educational ponds or as necessary. Stock Pond 3 every other year or as needed. (Fisheries)

Strategy 2: Manage aquatic and pond-side vegetation to allow reasonable shore angling by limiting sediment and nutrient inputs, mowing and, when needed, applying targeted aquatic-herbicide. Promote beneficial native aquatic plants through seeding and transplants, where appropriate and when possible. (Wildlife, Fisheries)

Strategy 3: Maintain pond dams clear of trees and shrubs to minimize potential for leaking and associated negative impacts to fish habitat. (Wildlife)

Strategy 4: Control muskrat and beaver in fish ponds, where burrowing creates a significant threat to the integrity of the dam or safety hazards for mowers on the dam. (Wildlife)

Strategy 5: Add at least two fish attracting devices to each educational pond where cover is limited. Attractors should be replaced, as needed, due to natural breakdown and loss of effectiveness over time. (Wildlife, Fisheries)

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Management opportunities exist for a diversity of habitats and wildlife species to provide opportunities for hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife viewing near a major metropolitan area.
- 2) Opportunities exist to facilitate participation in shooting and hunting through management of area shotgun and archery ranges.
- 3) Opportunities exist for school and civic groups to fish, hunt and camp through the special use permitting guidelines.
- 4) During periods of high river fluctuation, the area boat ramps accumulate silt and can make the ramps unusable. This often occurs during peak use times.

Management Objective 1: Maintain a diversity of terrestrial and aquatic habitats to provide public users with quality hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Strategy 1: Implement annual management activities targeting improvement of terrestrial wildlife populations. Terrestrial and wetland management activities should provide opportunities for hunting and viewing a variety of species including deer, turkey, doves, waterfowl and small game species such as squirrel, rabbit and quail. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Manage the area's aquatic resources to provide access and opportunity to quality fishing experiences. Maintain, evaluate and improve public access to the Platte River and area ponds, as feasible. Conduct periodic review of area ponds for the suitability of stocking to provide additional fishing opportunities as resources allow. (Wildlife, Fisheries)

Strategy 3: Maintain adequate access to area habitats through existing network of parking lots, levees and service roads. (Wildlife)

Strategy 4: Continue to allow trapping on area, as appropriate, through the special use permitting guidelines. (Wildlife)

Strategy 5: Continue dove management at current levels. (Wildlife)

Management Objective 2: Manage area shotgun and archery shooting ranges to accommodate a variety of shooting opportunities in a way that promotes safe and responsible participation in hunting and shooting.

Strategy 1: Conduct routine litter patrols to keep ranges cleared of trash and debris. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Work with local Conservation Agents and law enforcement officials to ensure compliance of range regulations by area users. (Wildlife, Protection)

Strategy 3: Promote ranges that are safe for public use and well maintained in accordance with current shooting range management guidelines. (Wildlife, Outreach and Education)

Management Objective 3: Promote the use of the area by school and civic groups through special use permitting guidelines.

Strategy 1: Allow group use requests that do not interfere with area management priorities in accordance with special use permitting guidelines. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Promote educational opportunities and school field trips as area resources and staffing will allow. (Wildlife, Outreach and Education)

Management Objective 4: Maintain the boat ramps in a usable condition that will meet the high demand of area users.

Strategy 1: Designate staff to remove silt deposits in a timely manner, especially during times of peak use. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Continue to work with Design and Development staff on the removal of heavy silt deposits along the banks of the boat ramps. (Wildlife, Design and Development)

Strategy 3: Continue to look for methods that will improve the efficiency of silt removal. (Wildlife, Design and Development)

VIII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Maintain area infrastructure at current levels.
- 2) Opportunities exist to build relationships with neighboring landowners.
- 3) Acquisition of land.

Management Objective 1: Maintain area infrastructure.

Strategy 1: Maintain area infrastructure in accordance with Department guidelines. (Wildlife, Fisheries)

Management Objective 2: Promote a positive working relationship with neighboring landowners.

Strategy 1: Respond to neighbors with requests for shared fencing, boundary issues or trespass problems. (Wildlife, Fisheries)

Strategy 2: Respond to neighboring landowners interested in habitat management on their private property. (Private Land Services, Forestry, Wildlife)

Strategy 3: Continue to communicate area management activities and/or infrastructure changes to area neighbors. (Wildlife)

Lands Proposed for Acquisition:

When available, adjacent land may be considered for acquisition from willing sellers. Tracts that improve area access, provide public use opportunities, contain unique natural communities and/or species of conservation concern, or meet other Department priorities, as identified in the annual Department land acquisition priorities, may be considered.

MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE

Strategies are considered ongoing unless listed in the following table:

	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations										
<i>Objective 1</i>										
Strategy 1										X
Aquatic Resource Management										
<i>Objective 1</i>										
Strategy 1	X					X				
Strategy 2	X									
<i>Objective 4</i>										
Strategy 3	X		X		X		X		X	
Strategy 5	X			X			X			X

APPENDICES

References:

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2009). *Watershed and stream management guidelines for lands and waters managed by Missouri Department of Conservation*. Jefferson City, Missouri: Missouri Department of Conservation.

Appendices:

Appendix 1. Area Background for Platte Falls Conservation Area

Appendix 2. Area Background for Sharps Station Access

Appendix 3. Area Map

Appendix 4. Aerial Easement Map

Appendix 5. Topographic Map

Appendix 6. Vegetation Map

Appendix 1. Area Background for Platte Falls Conservation Area

The first settler in Platte County was Zadoc Martin. Under a special permit from the Army, Martin operated a ferry at the Falls of the Platte on the military road running from Liberty to Fort Leavenworth. The Falls of the Platte (the Conservation Area's namesake) played an important role in the early history of Platte County, and more specifically the region surrounding what is now Platte Falls Conservation Area. During the area's early settlement (1828), the Falls of the Platte was the only crossing point for many miles along the Platte River. The limestone shelf of rock that made up the falls was later quarried and used in the construction of a bridge over the original falls site, later known as the Main Street Bridge in Platte City. The Main Street Bridge was later demolished when the Missouri Highway 92 bridge was completed.

The historic land use of Platte Falls Conservation Area was varied. The area consisted of flood prone bottomlands along the Platte River with some upland timber and grassland, varying from gentle to steep sloping terrain. Primitive inhabitation was common on the uplands sites overlooking the Platte River. Later the fertile river bottom fields were farmed. The upland hills were grazed and well-suited for tobacco cropping. The timbered ridges were used for wood products and hunting.

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Miles	% of Area
Bottomland Timber	954		41
Upland Timber	356		15
Crop Fields	295		12
Old Field	217		9
Wetlands	206		9
Grassland	162		7
Scrub/Shrub	136		6
Roads/Structures	23		1
Ponds	6		<1
Total	2,356		100
Platte River Frontage		10.4	

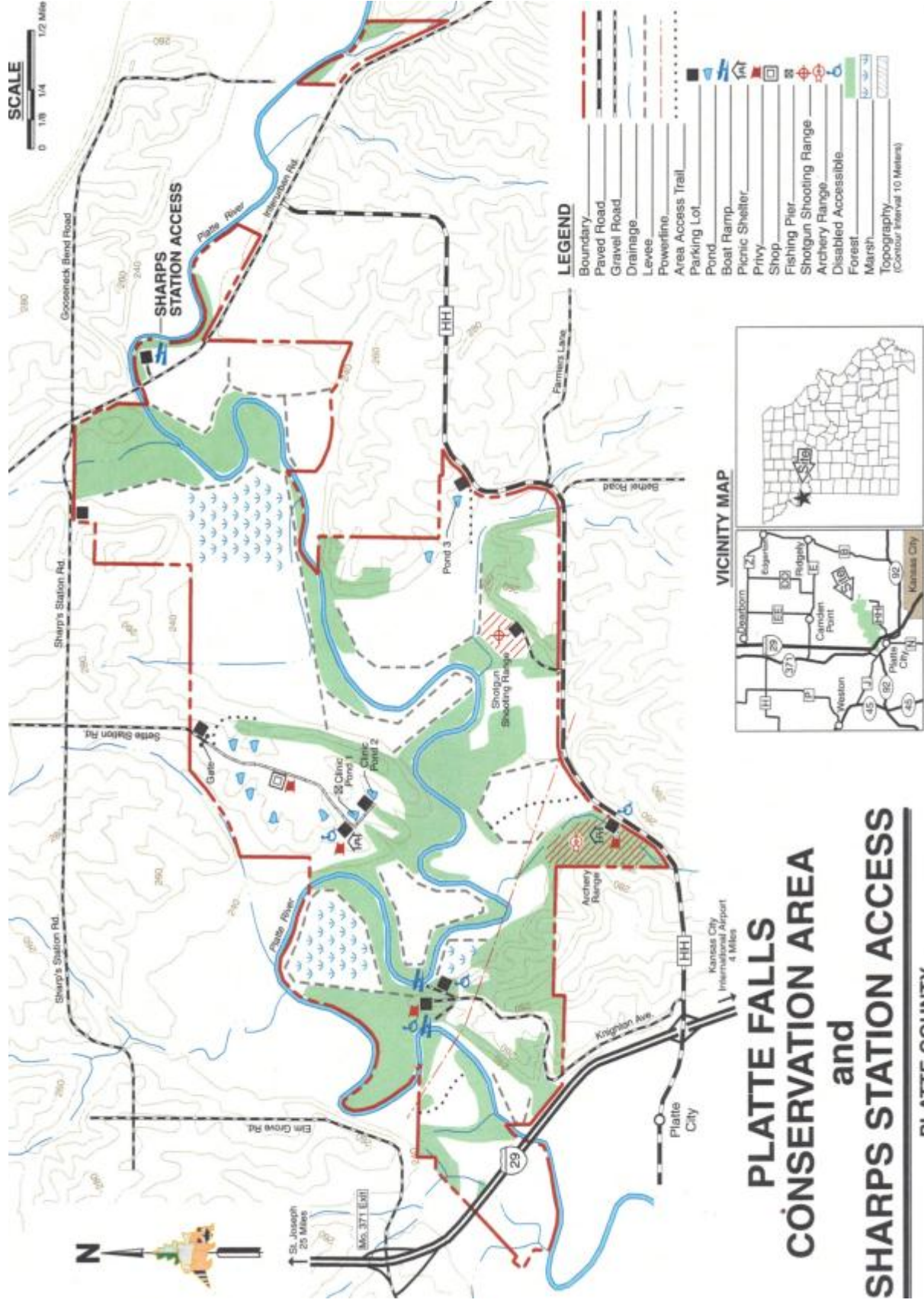
Appendix 2. Area Background for Sharps Station Access

Sharps Station Access was purchased to provide public access to the Platte River. It was named after the closest town at the time the access was purchased.

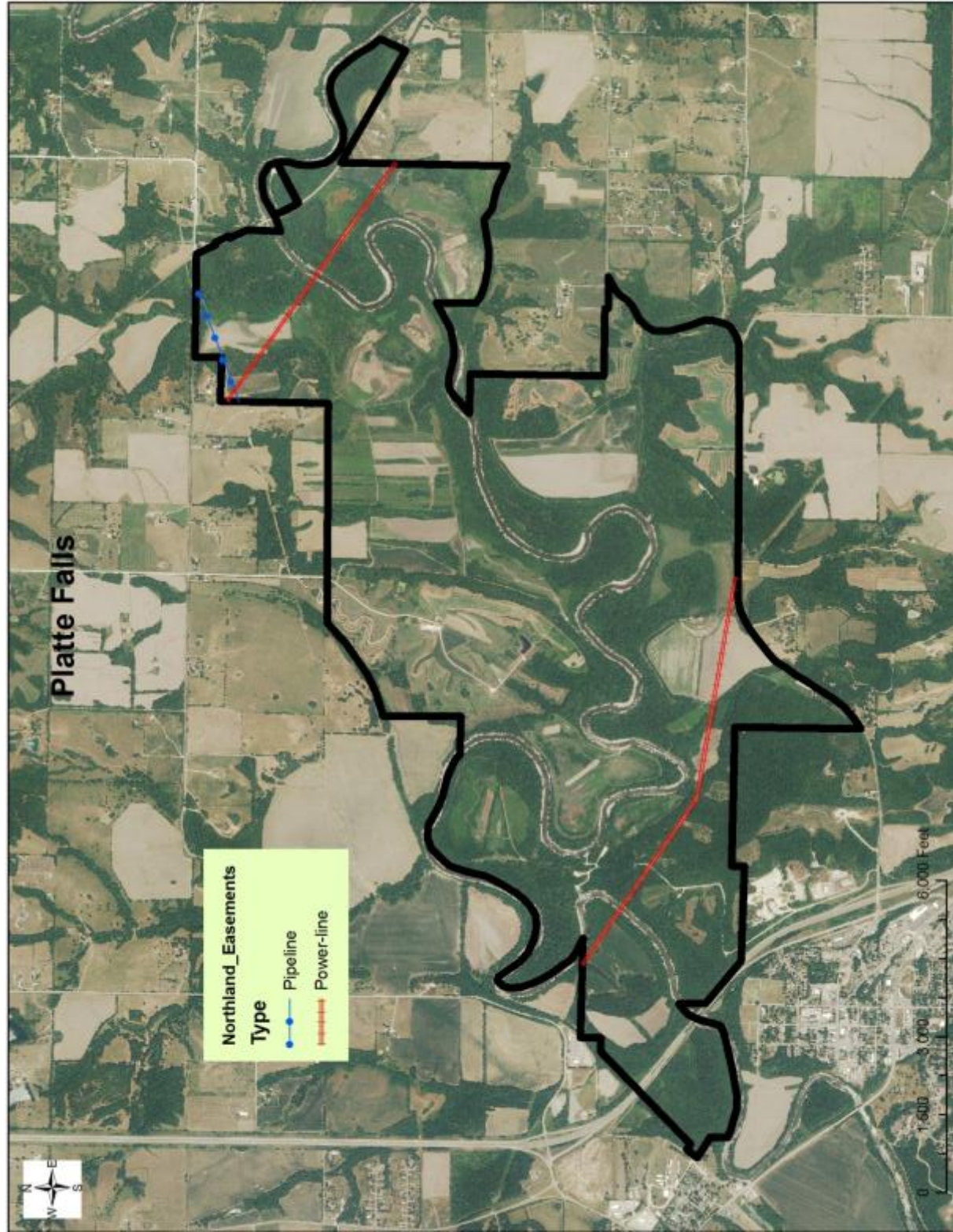
Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Miles	% of Area
Bottomland Timber	9		90
Roads/Structures	1.3		10
Total	10.3		100
Platte River Frontage		0.25	

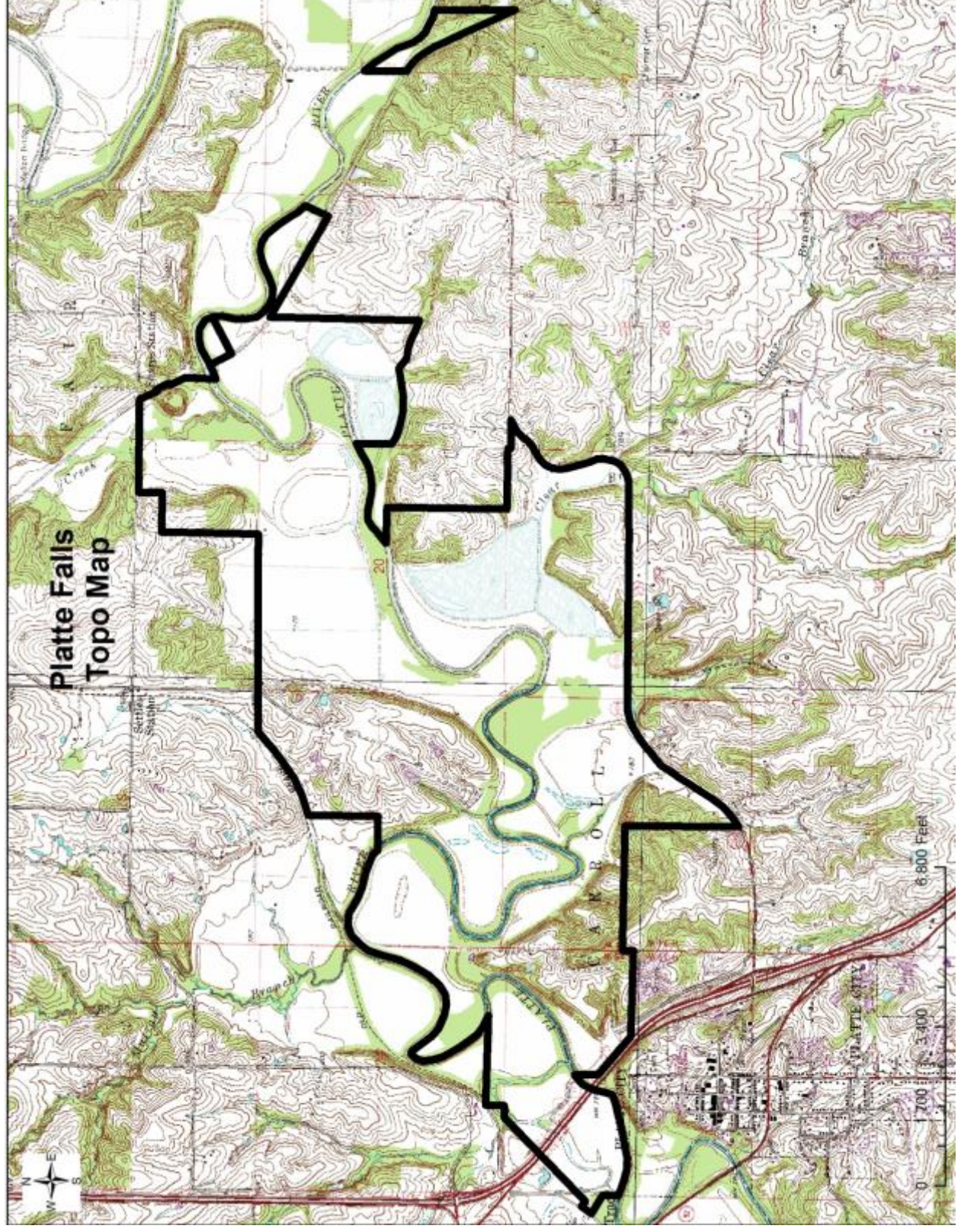
Appendix 3. Area Map



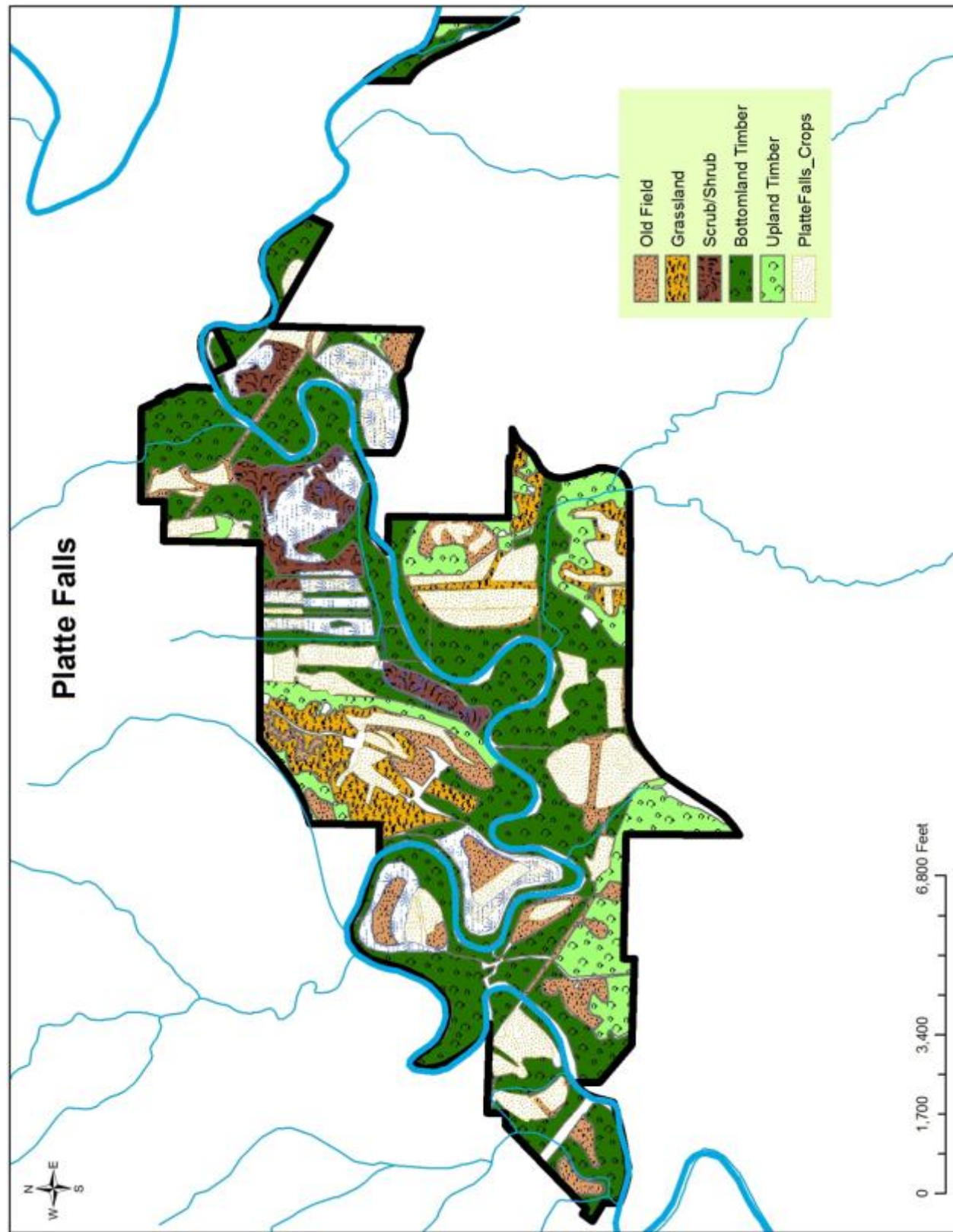
Appendix 4. Aerial Easement Map



Appendix 5. Topographic Map



Appendix 6. Vegetation Map



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